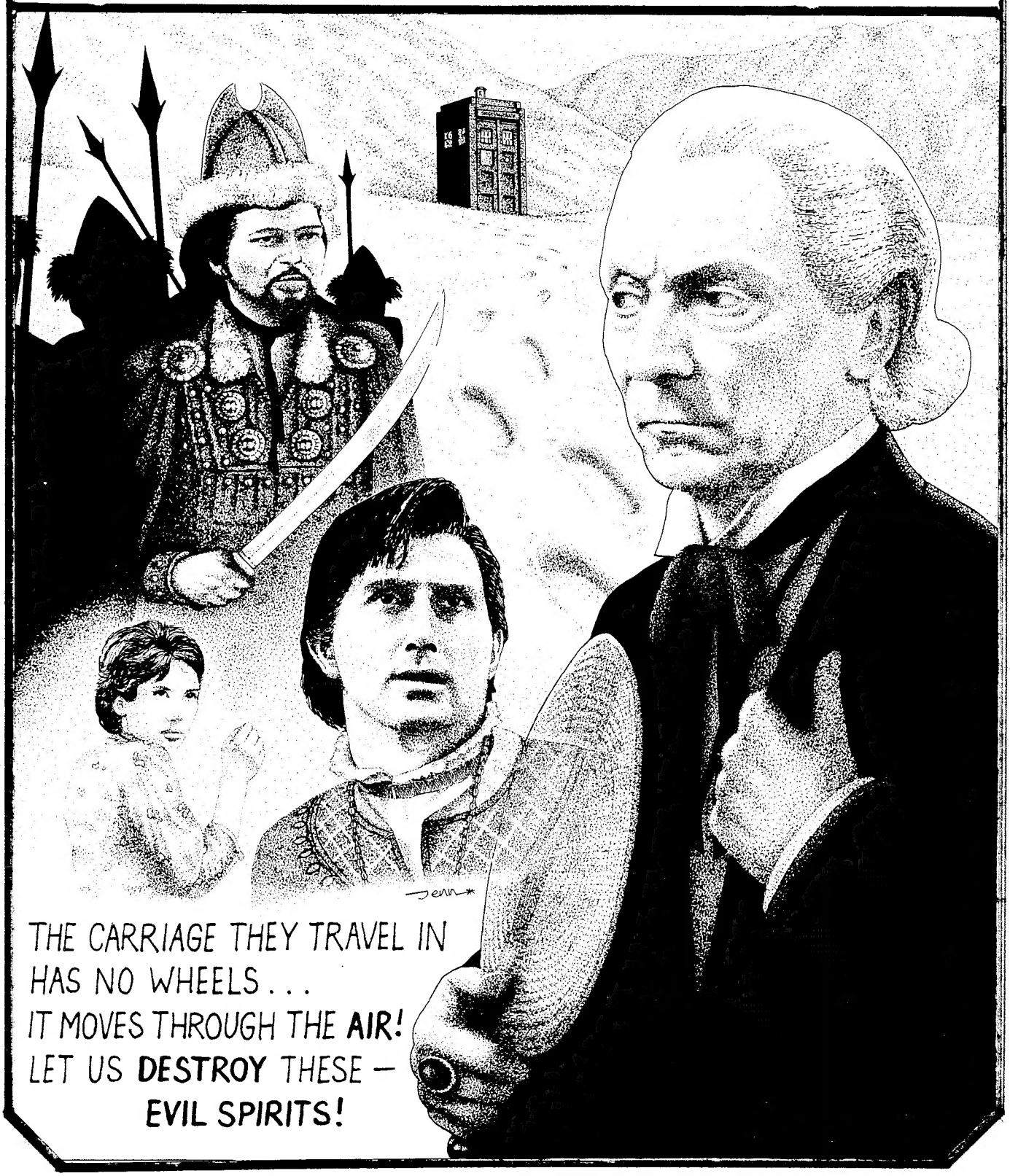
DOCTOR WHO

SERIAL D

MARCO POLO

BY JOHN LUCAROTTI

An Adventure in Space & Time



Doctor Who—An Adventure in Space and Time

The Moon had risen high into the clear night sky, casting a pale illumination about the motley collection of tents that formed the caravan of Marco Polo. Inside the largest one Marco sat before a table, attempting to compose an entry for his journal on the day's unexpected encounters.

He suddenly became aware of Tegana's presence. "You should have let me kill them," said the warrior.

Marco did not look up. "Why?" he asked. "Because their clothes are different from ours? Because their words are unfamiliar to our ears? No, Tegana, they are travellers."

"They are evil spirits. Sorcerers! Magicians! Tomorrow, if we live until then, you may see that I speak the truth."

Marco sat back in his seat and studied the Tartar emissary. The flickering light from the lanterns showed clearly that the man was afraid. He tried to sound re-assuring. "I think the sun's rays will dispel the shadows from your mind, Tegana."

"Is that what you believe?" Tegana strode over to face Marco across the table. When he spoke there was both urgency and fear in his voice. "Listen. The carriage they travel in has no wheels! It just stands there like a warlord's tomb on one end! And another thing. It is not large enough to carry four people..."

The Venetian's eyebrows knitted in puzzlement. "It must be."

"I say it is not, and yet I saw all four walk from it. Upon my sword I swear it to you!"

The powerful warrior turned to leave, perhaps embarrassed by his show of superstitious fear. Polo was more thoughtful. A sorcerer's caravan, he mused. If Tegana's words were true then it could provide him with a solution to his problem. Clearly a few words with the young man, Ian, were in order the next morning...

('The Roof of the World' - 22nd. February 1964)

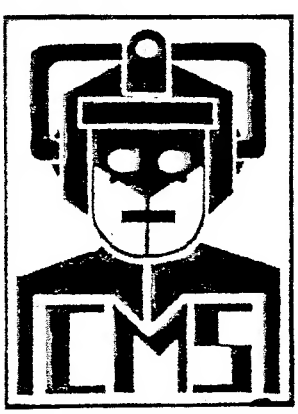
Story Four ~ "MARCO POLO"

The giant footprint was found to be no more than an ordinary print, enlarged by the melting snow. However, the travellers were forced to remain on the freezing plateau whilst the Doctor tried to instigate repairs to the TARDIS, damaged during its struggle at the birth of a solar system.

Soon they were confronted by a group of fur-clad people, whom Barbara recognised to be Tartar warriors from Earth's history. The travellers' interest was deepened still by the appearance of the famous Venetian traveller, Marco Polo. For the year was 1289, the location, the vast range of mountains in Afghanistan known as 'The Roof of the World', and Marco Polo was heading a peace mission back to Cathay to be presented to Kublai Khan. The Doctor and his companions were forced to join the caravan, during which time the Doctor planned to effect the necessary repairs to his ship. However, Marco Polo became convinced that the ship possessed magical powers, and decided to present it as a gift to the Khan in the hope this would enable him to be released from the Khan's service to return home to Venice. The perpetrator of the suggestion of magical powers was a man named Tegana, a peace ambassador from the Khan's rival, Lord Noghai. Tegana was to prove an even greater threat to the travellers throughout their long journey. Had they but known it, his true purpose was to travel to Cathay to assassinate the Khan...

Having left the frozen wastes of the Pamir plateau, the travellers had next to endure the torturous heat of the Gobi Desert. Here Tegana attempted to let the travellers die of thirst by smashing their water barrels, but the condensation which formed on the walls of the TARDIS during the cold night saved their lives. The journey continued, the travellers becoming increasingly suspicious of Tegana (all except Polo, who refused to acknowledge Tegana as anything more than "a very important man" on a genuine errand of peace). Apart from the peace talks a young Chinese girl, Ping-Cho, was travelling with the caravan to Cathay, there to be married to an elderly statesman - much against her wishes. She formed a great friendship with Susan during the journey, and was keen that the time travellers should remain unharmed.

At last, the caravan arrived at Peking, and the travellers were allowed to relax in great luxury at the Khan's summer palace. The Doctor and the Khan discovered much in common with each other, passing their time with games of backgammon. However, Tegana now decided to play his hand, and made to carry out the assassination. Before he could strike, Tegana was confronted by Polo. The two were locked in mortal combat, but finally, Tegana took his own life, so ending the threat to the Khan and his empire. Marco sadly returned the TARDIS' key to the travellers, and watched as the ship dematerialised.



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Writers this issue.....Jeremy Bentham

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John Peel

Story Review
"All Things Are Possible"

Written by John Peel

The historical stories always seem to have had a very bad press; they were dull, it is said, or long-winded, or slowed down the pace of the science-fiction stories. Whatever the reason, they were the early victims of cancellation. To me, this is very hard to understand.

Some historical stories were poor - as were some science-fiction - but when examining such a story as 'Marco Polo', the only judgement that can be pronounced upon it is that it stands head and shoulders above even the classic 'Daleks' story. Without a shadow of a doubt, it is the most brilliant story the show has ever presented, a flawless gem amidst the wonders of the first season. The only story to remotely rival it is 'The Aztecs' - surely not a coincidence? Both were scripted by the amply-gifted writer, John Lucarotti.

The very locations are fabulous - from the mountains of Tibet, through the scorching sands of the Gobi, into the bamboo forests and finally to the great summer palace of Kublai Khan...Stunning sets, ranging from a cave of Five Hundred Eyes to the elaborately ornate palace, costumes that are rich and authentic and, very satisfying, the beautiful music of Tristram Cary - marvellously evocative of the atmosphere of Cathay...

The Tartar warlord, Tegana, is a subtle and interesting character, with Derren Nesbitt producing a restrained and believable villain of this emissary. His philosophy is summed up with his views of chess: "I find it a fascinating game of strategy of war. Two equally balanced armies deployed upon a field of battle, and each commander determined to be the one who cries 'Shamat'!" War is his life, and the armies are not merely chessmen, but those of the Tartars and the Khan; the two kings are the Great Khan himself and Noghai...and Tegana is a knight: "I serve Noghai, who will soon rule the world." His task is difficult, casting suspicion of the travellers first upon Marco, then upon the Khan. He succeeds even in alienating the Khan from his trusted Marco, and very nearly succeeds in his task of assassinating the Khan.

Ping-Cho is a splendid, delightful girl, tensely balanced between her loyalty to Marco Polo and her friendship for Susan. The two girls, separated by the width of time and space, discover much in common and they grow very much attached to each other, much to Marco's annoyance. Ping-Cho's fate of marriage to an elderly statesman is averted in a wryly ironic manner. At seventy-five, he's afraid that his virility and age might prevent him from consummating the marriage; so he resorts to a special longevity potion...which kills him.

The Great Khan himself, the terrifying monarch of Cathay, turns out to be an amiable old man, with a delightful streak of humour in his make-up. The Doctor is warned to kowtow to the Khan when he enters, which, stubbornly, he refuses to do. When the Khan enters, the old man conspicuously remains standing. Kublai Khan demands a reason, and the Doctor points out that he's had to ride for twelve days on horse-back to get here, and he's stiff in every joint! The Khan laughs and pardons the offence, for he too knows the pains of old age. He closets himself quietly away with the Doctor, and even Marco is apprehensive of what will happen with this arrogant old man and the mighty ruler. Somewhat staggered, he reports to Barbara and Susan, "You won't believe this, but it's true - they're playing backgammon for your caravan!" The caravan is, of course, the TARDIS, which Marco and Tegana are both convinced can fly, and both wish to deliver it to their master as a special gift!

Without a doubt, though, it is Marco Polo himself who steals the

entire show. He provides a marvellous counter-balance to the Doctor, being just as cunning and whimsically inclined as the time traveller. He is a servant of the Great Khan, but hasn't been allowed to leave for home; for eighteen years he has served, and now his enemies are growing. He informs the Doctor, "If he dies, I may never see Venice again." Callously, the Doctor replies: "That is your problem, not mine!" With a smile, Marco shakes his head. "I have just made it yours, Doctor." By giving the Khan a flying caravan, he hopes to bribe him into allowing him to go home. He is not aloof to the problems this may cause to the travellers, and offers to transport them all home. Ian attempts to explain. "We can't go by boat! We need the TARDIS!" This fails to impress Marco at all. "I grant you, England's a long way...but, Ian, you can sail it! The Crusaders did it." Ian reluctantly tells Marco that they are from the future. Marco finds this far too much to accept. He has seen black rock that will burn; why not cabinets that fly? He has seen even fish that can fly...But travel through the centuries? No, that is too much!

He finds himself strangely drawn to these travellers, but cannot believe their wild tales, especially concerning their suspicions of Tegana. "Let me tell you something, Ian. Tegana is a special envoy of Noghai, on his way to talk peace with Kublai Khan. He's a very important man. You are some mysterious travellers from some...some far-off land that I know nothing about. Now, if you were in my position, a servant of Kublai Khan - whose word would you take?" Eventually, circumstances finally prove that Ian has been telling them the truth, and Marco slips the key to the TARDIS back to the travellers.

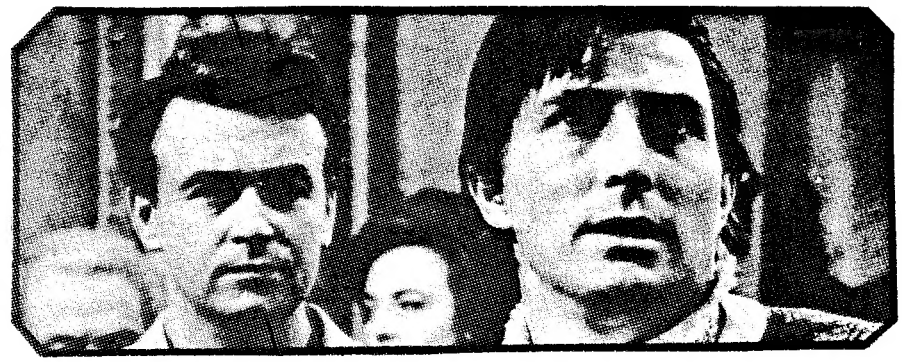
"I am sorry, my lord. I had to give them back their flying caravan." The Khan is philosophical about this loss. "If you hadn't... the old man would have won it back at backgammon."

The balance of this story is remarkable and the interference with recorded history quite minimal. Action and adventure alternate with description and education, subtly passed over in the story, blending to a remarkable degree. The arrival of a messenger to Marco from Peking is the introduction of a short piece of description as to the message carrying capabilities of the imperial post office - three hundred miles in a single day! Another sequence in Tun-Huang has the background of a storyteller's bazaar, with an old legend providing the backdrop to Tegana's plotting. Though always present, the history lesson never intrudes into the story. The final ingredient is the dry humour, generally at the Doctor's expense. At one stop, the TARDIS is placed in the stables, which causes the Doctor to mimic their host's sing-song style: "'I couldn't put it in the hanging-garden, could I?' What does he think it is - a potting shed?"

All in all, if a single story could ever sum up for me the wonder of 'Doctor Who', it would be this one. Gorgeous, fast, tense, funny and filled with character and feel for the period - 'Marco Polo' is one of the true classics of television. When history can be so enjoyable, it's a terrible shame that the concept of the truly historical drama no longer plays a part in the programme. And it's a very sad loss.

MARCO POLO

Character Profile By JEREMY BENTHAM



A stranger in a strange land - the prosaic science-fiction title that could be applied in this story to both Marco Polo and the Doctor. Polo is a European constantly encountering new wonders as he travels about the Khan's vast kingdom. The Doctor hails from another world and this particular point in Earth's history is, by his own admission, somewhere he has never been before.

However, Marco Polo does enjoy one advantage denied the Doctor. It is his journey, his caravan, and the Doctor's party are his guests and hence expected to conform to their host's requests. That they more often than not fail to comply with his wishes is the sore point that causes constant friction between the Venetian and both Ian and the Doctor.

Polo's antagonism with the Doctor is easy to understand. When the Doctor's ship is seized by Marco as an intended gift to Kublai Khan, the Doctor's immense technological superiority over the people of this time is taken away. He is reduced to the status of just another passenger, a role to which he replies by giving full vent to his cantankerous bad temper. For much of the journey to Shang-tu the Doctor is constantly insulting and abusing Marco Polo with such epithets as "You poor, pathetic, stupid savage!" and "The man's a lunatic". But it is impotent rage, for without the TARDIS the Doctor is unable to prove, nor even exhibit, his vast mental superiority.

Between Ian and Marco the antagonism works at a different level. Early in the story the pair match wits across a Chess table, a symbolic contest that easily mirrors the sparring of later incidents. Marco's goal is to get the flying caravan to the Khan; Ian's objective is to obtain the keys to the ship and to get the four of them away. Ultimately though, it is Ian who has to lose face before Polo. Whatever the moral arguments behind the Venetian's requisition of the TARDIS, Ian's subsequent deceptions to try and regain the keys are regarded in a far lower light, and it is ironic that by the time the caravan is approaching the last stages of the journey Tegana, the real villain amongst them, is held in higher esteem than Ian in Polo's eyes.

Above all else Polo is both a rationalist and a superb strategist, as his mastery of Chess proclaims. With his father and his uncle he left Venice for Cathay in 1271 when Marco was just seventeen years old. In 1277 he was appointed emissary to the Khan, who liked and admired the erudite young European, and since then has travelled the length and breadth of the Khan's empire in his service. Now it is 1289, and the thirty-five year old Polo is hungry for sight of Venice. When Ian tries to explain away the wonders of the TARDIS by giving it the simplified description of a flying caravan, Polo sees in it a gift to the Khan that will make him, hopefully, favourably disposed towards granting the Venetian's request. As a just man, Polo does not intend to abandon the Doctor's party, and offers to take them to Venice where they will be able to build a new flying caravan...

Finally, after Tegana's death, Marco's debt to Ian leads him to return the keys. The ship departs and the travellers' claim is proven. But as Marco remarks, as he and the Khan watch the ship vanish: "...What is the truth? Where are they now? The Past or the Future?"

TEGANA

CHARACTER PROFILE BY

John Peel

"I serve Noghai, who will soon rule the world!" This is Tegana's philosophy, his motivation: he seeks only the rise of his master and the subservience of all Cathay to the Tartar hordes. But the Tartar army is no match for the army of Kublai Khan, especially when led by the able, albeit ancient, warlord descendent of the great Ghengis Khan. To Noghai, the solution is simple: an assassin. And of all his men, who is more able for such a role than Tegana?

The Tartar warlord is a devious man, and his subtle brain spells danger frequently for Marco and the travellers. His sole aim, from the first and throughout the long journey, is to delay Marco's trip to Peking to allow the Tartar hordes to advance upon Peking. Once they are in position he will slay the Khan and, whilst confusion reigns in the city, the hordes will descend and conquer. But with the advent of the four time travellers the whole purpose takes a sudden turn. Tegana watches in amazement as the TARDIS materialises, and then four people emerge. He tells Marco: "Listen! The carriage they travel in has no wheels...Another thing! It is not large enough to carry four people...and I saw all four walk from it." He is superstitious and, to his mind, there is but one explanation: "In these parts lurk evil spirits...They take our forms and then deceive us to lead us to our deaths. Let us destroy them before they destroy us!" But, as he gets to know and hate the Doctor and his companions, he realises that they are not spirits, but men with a wonderful device, a "flying caravan". Tegana's mind instantly seizes upon the significance of this: With such a device, Noghai can become invincible! The TARDIS must be secured!

Master of smooth words and guile, he turns the suspicions of Marco against the travellers and, later, those of the Khan against Marco. Grimly, Marco realises that all the time he has been out-smarted, and at the end confesses, "I underestimated you, Tegana." An easy thing, for Tegana is no fool. He even possesses a grim sense of humour. To the Khan, he says: "I promised Noghai to make an end of this matter..." - meaning not peace, but all-out war, even though the Khan does not suspect this. He also possesses a total lack of conscience. He bears down upon an unarmed Ian and Ping-Cho, prepared to kill them. Ian pleads for Ping-Cho. "Will the mighty warlord kill a child?" The Tartar shrugs: "She is in my way, as you are." And that is enough; she, too, must die. He projects his attitudes onto others, and earlier has accused Ian of killing a guard to make his escape. "Not everyone lives by your standards, Tegana," Ian answers him in disgust.

But Tegana has one failing. Secure in his own mind against the tales of the travellers, he holds them in contempt, and sees them as too small a threat. Finally he projects the same helpless image onto Polo himself. Having ingratiated himself with the Khan, he turns the ruler against Polo, and then dismisses the Venetian from his mind. And it is this failure to hold a realistic view of the capabilities of the five foreigners that dooms him. Polo and Ian, realising the scheme of the warlord, confront him just before he has his chance to deliver a fatal stab-wound to the Great Khan. Disgraced by the failure of his mission, but unafraid of death, Tegana takes his own life with the point of his own blade.

Technical Observations

John Lucarotti based the storyline of this serial upon Marco Polo's 'Description of the World', the diaries of the Venetian traveller, "and highlighted the adventures of going over 'the Roof of the World' and 'the Cave of Five Hundred Eyes' in Afghanistan". Great effort was made to adhere to historical fact, whilst blending this with fiction. "We could say that, as a result of the Doctor's intervention, history turned out the way it did." Thus we meet Marco Polo in the year 1289, during his time as an envoy in the service of Kublai Khan.

Black-and-White television aided many scenic effects. By shining different coloured lights to enhance certain tones, a powdery, sawdust-like material could be made to look like snow or sand as required.

For the first time in 'Doctor Who' animals made an appearance. In this instance horses were used by the caravan to pull the carts, including the one on which was mounted the TARDIS. Saddled horses were also used in some scenes.

To date this is the only serial to have had a "captain's log" style narration to link scenes together. The narration was spoken by Marco Polo (Mark Eden) as he wrote the entries in his diary.

To illustrate the journey from the Pamir plain (where the TARDIS materialised) to the Khan's summer palace an animated map was shown on screen to accompany the narration. As the long journey progressed - and scenes were linked - so the line showing the travellers' progress on the map gradually extended. The map was drawn on scroll parchment and lettered in copperplate handwriting.

Despite the enormous scale of the story and the exotic nature of its locations, no exterior camera work was done at all. Everything was accomplished in 'Studio D' at Lime Grove.

'Marco Polo' gave the BBC an opportunity to use its costume department to the fullest, with dozens of accurately designed costumes of the period having to be produced. Carole Ann Ford (Susan Foreman) regards those efforts with particular appreciation. "I at last was allowed to get out of my jeans and sweater."

In keeping with Verity Lambert's directives this serial had several staged pieces to put forward educational points to its audience. During the third episode Ping-Cho delivers a monologue on the story of the 'Hashashin' murder cult (the word "assassin" is derived from 'hashashin' - 'hashish-eaters'). These were specially trained fanatical murderers whose only desire was to fulfil their mission and who were motivated by the certainty of attaining Paradise. Tegana had travelled to Peking to assassinate Kublai Khan. During the journey Tegana provides the origin of the phrase 'check-mate' in Chess; from the Arabic "shah mata" - the king is dead.

Ever conscious of the economics of TV, designer Barry Newbery had several of the sets built to the same plan. These sets were modular in design and could be struck, re-positioned and linked together to form new designs. By the careful re-arrangement of curtains, drapes and shutters, doors, pillars, windows, etc., could be hidden or displayed. Good examples of this are the Way Station sets which were all of the same construction, but which could be made to look different by redressing the set and re-positioning the props. The interiors were also altered by the careful use of lighting. As the party progressed towards Peking the Way Stations were made to look more opulent and ornate.

Production Credits

"DOCTOR WHO" CREATED BY SYDNEY NEWMAN AND DONALD WILSON

SERIAL "D" SEVEN EPISODES BLACK AND WHITE

"THE ROOF OF THE WORLD"	-	22nd. February 1964
"THE SINGING SANDS"	-	29th. February 1964
"FIVE HUNDRED EYES"	-	7th. March 1964
"THE WALL OF LIES"	-	14th. March 1964
"RIDER FROM SHANG-TU"	-	21st. March 1964
"MIGHTY KUBLAI KHAN"	-	28th. March 1964
"ASSASSIN AT PEKING"	-	4th. April 1964

CAST

DOCTOR WHO.....WILLIAM HARTNELL
IAN CHESTERTON.....WILLIAM RUSSELL
BARBARA WRIGHT.....JACQUELINE HILL
SUSAN FOREMAN.....CAROLE ANN FORD

MARCO POLO.....MARK EDEN
TEGANA.....DERREN NESBITT
PING-CHO.....ZIENIA MERTON
MAN AT LOP.....LESLIE BATES
CHENCHU.....JIMMY GARDNER
MALIK.....CHARLES WADE
ACOMAT.....PHILIP VOSS
LING-TAU.....PAUL CARSON
WANG-LO.....GABOR BARAKER
KUIJU.....TUTTE LEMKOW
VIZIER.....PETER LAWRENCE
KUBLAI KHAN.....MARTIN MILLER
OFFICE FOREMAN.....BASIL TANG
EMPRESS.....CLAIRE DAVENPORT
MONGOL WARRIORS.....JOHN LEE
ARNOLD LEE, ROY VINCENTE
RONALD CHEE, CLEM CHOY
CARLTON NGUI
ATTENDANT ON PING-CHO
ZOHRA SEGAL

YENG.....O. IKEDA
CHINESE LADY OF QUALITY
VIOLET LEON
ATTENDANT.....SUK HEE S'HNG
CHINESE VILLAGERS...CLEM CHOY
IRENE HO
PEGGY SIRR
MONGOL BANDITS....SANTOS WONG
MICHAEL GUEST
GORDON BREMWORTH
LESLIE BATES
ROY VINCENTE
MONGOL CARAVAN PORTERS
AMAN TOKYO
ETON FING-ON
CARAVAN BEARERS.....HENRY LOY
MAUNG HLASHWE, L. LIM
BOON WAN LEE, YING WIU
CARAVAN WARRIOR
DAVID ANDERSON

CREW

SWORD FIGHT ARRANGER.....DEREK WARE
PRODUCTION ASSISTANTS.....DOUGLAS CAMFIELD
PENNY JOY
ASSISTANT FLOOR MANAGER...CATHERINE CHILDS
COSTUME SUPERVISOR.....DAPHNE DARE
MAKE-UP SUPERVISOR.....ANN FERRIGGI
INCIDENTAL MUSIC.....TRISTRAM CARY
STORY EDITOR.....DAVID WHITAKER
DESIGNER.....BARRY NEWBERY
ASSOCIATE PRODUCER.....MERVYN PINFIELD
PRODUCER.....VERITY LAMBERT
DIRECTOR (4).....JOHN CROCKETT
DIRECTOR.....WARIS HUSSEIN

Compiled by Gary Hopkins